

# USLM Project

with Congress and GPO

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# What is USLM?

- United States Legislative Markup
- An XML information model designed to represent the legislation of United States Congress
- Initially designed for the United States Code
- Designed to be adaptable
- Open data format
- Compatible with international standards
- Legislative Branch XML Working Group manages the USLM schema
- [uscode.house.gov/download/resources/USLM-User-Guide.pdf](https://uscode.house.gov/download/resources/USLM-User-Guide.pdf)

# XML Basics

- Extensible Markup Language
- XML is a markup language that defines a set of rules for encoding documents in a format that is both human-readable and machine-readable
- It contains Elements and Attributes for content
- It is verified by a DTD or Schema

# Akoma Ntoso

- Akoma Ntoso defines a set of simple technology-neutral electronic representations in XML format for parliamentary, legislative, and judicial documents
- It means “linked hearts” in the Akan language of West Africa
- It is initiative of “Africa i-Parliament Action Plan” a program of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- [www.akomantoso.org](http://www.akomantoso.org)



The Akoma Ntoso logo is symbol used by the Akan people of West Africa to represent understanding and agreement, “linked hearts” or Akoma Ntoso

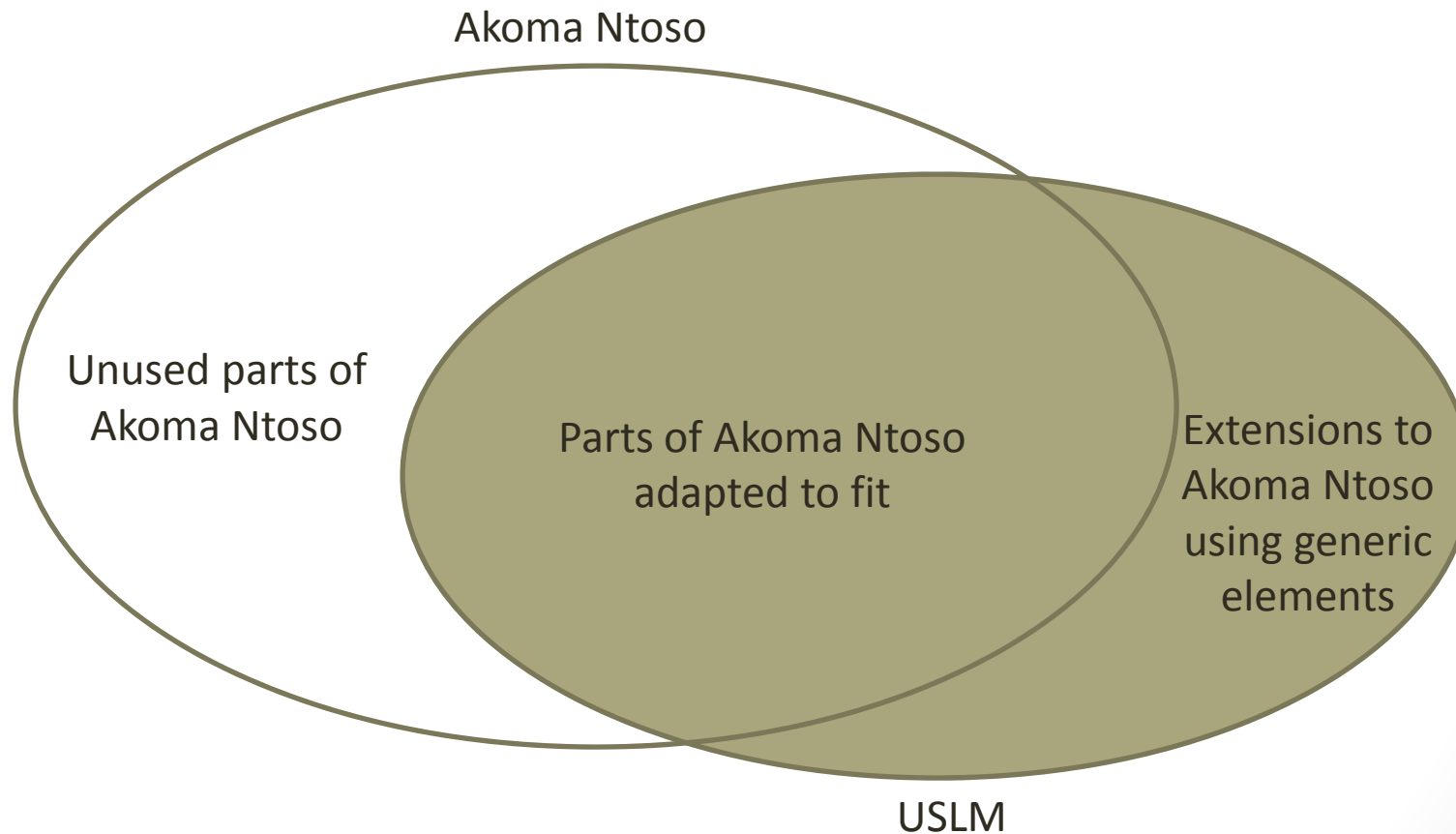
# Akoma Ntoso for Open Access

- Open access requires the information to be described and classified in a uniform and organized way so that
  - content is structured into meaningful elements that can be read and understood by software applications
  - the content is made “machine readable”
  - sophisticated applications (more than on-screen display) are made possible

# Legal Document XML

- Usually called LegalDocML
- Proposed standard by the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS)
- In final stages of adopting the standard
- It is the standardization of Akoma Ntoso
- The terms Akoma Ntoso and LegalDocML are frequently used interchangeably
- [www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc\\_home.php?wg\\_abbrev=legaldocml](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=legaldocml)

# Akoma Ntoso / USLM



*Based on a diagram by Grant Vergottini, Xcential Group*

# USLM with Akoma Ntoso

- USLM is compatible with Akoma Ntoso to the extent practicable
- The plan is to make USLM documents easily convertible to Akoma Ntoso for use outside government



# USLM Projects

- 2 Projects
  - Documents in USLM project
  - Federal Register (FR) / Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Pilot Project
- Both projects run in parallel
- Formally began in April 2017
- Scheduled to last one year

# Documents in USLM

- **Goal:** Convert a subset of enrolled bills, public laws, and the Statutes at Large from GPO locator-coded text format into USLM XML
- **Dataset:** Enrolled Bills and Public Laws (113th Congress, 2013 forward), Statutes at Large (108th Congress, 2003 forward)
- **Stakeholders:** GPO, House, Senate, OFR/NARA, Congressional Support Organizations
- **Development:** Contract award to Xcential in March 2017

# Lifecycle of a Legislative Provision

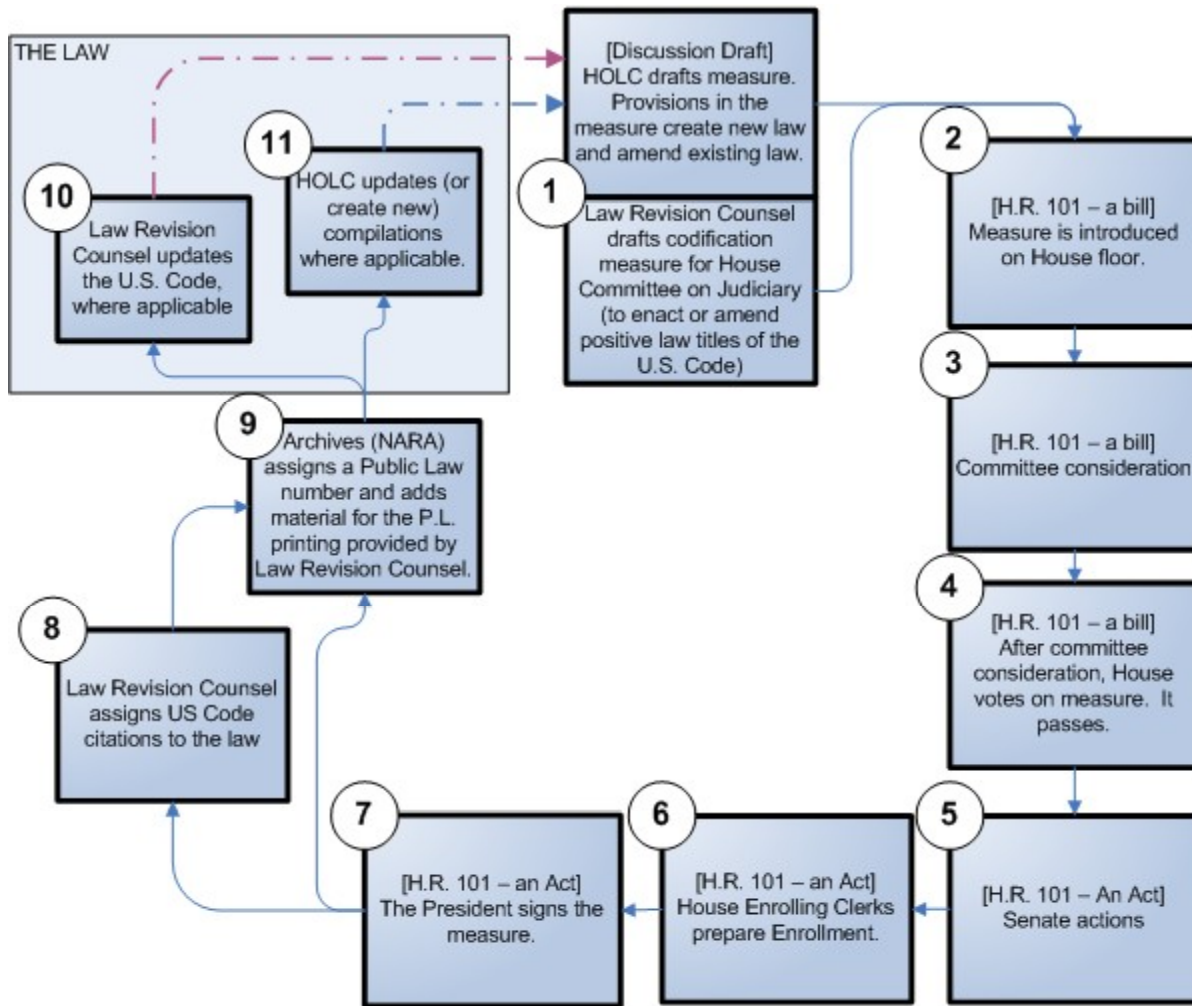


Diagram version 1.0 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

# Documents in USLM Tasks

- Develop a transform to convert enrolled bills, public laws, and Statutes at Large from GPO locator-coded text into USLM XML
- Integrate the transform with FDsys/govinfo Processing
- Style and present the XML
- Provide access to the USLM XML via the FDsys/govinfo Bulk Data Repository

# Documents in USLM Objectives

- Promote domestic interoperability among documents as they flow through the legislative cycle
- Promote international interoperability with documents produced by parliaments world-wide
- Transition the Legislative branch from current 1st Generation DTDs to 2nd Generation XML schema
- Validate and, if necessary, extend the existing USLM schema for use in the entire legislative process
- Non-disruptively enhance existing processes at the House, Senate, GPO, and OFR

# Documents in USLM Objectives

Continued -

- Provide a USLM dataset to GPO for use in the Composition System Replacement project
- Provide a USLM dataset for potential projects to refresh the Bill-DTD XMetal editing environment
- Provide a USLM dataset of laws to OLRC for use in the House Modernization Initiative
- Provide a USLM dataset to the transparency community, vendor community, and the public

# FR / CFR Pilot

- **Goal:** Validate the USLM XML schema and tools in the Federal regulatory cycle and in GPO's publishing processes
- **Dataset:** CFR Titles 5 – Administrative Personnel, 12 – Banks and Banking, 27 – Alcohol Tobacco Products and Firearms, and 40 – Protection of Environment (2016 forward); FR (2015 forward)
- **Stakeholders:** GPO, OFR/NARA, Regulatory Agencies
- **Development:** Contract award to Xcential in March 2017

# FR / CFR Pilot Tasks

- Transform FR and CFR SGML into USLM XML including tagging of IBR, FR citations, NAICS codes, NEPA docs, effective dates, and significance determinations
- Integrate the transform with FDsys/govinfo Processing
- Style and present the XML
- Provide access to the USLM XML via the FDsys/govinfo Bulk Data Repository
- Create a prototype online display for the CFR that includes point-in-time and redlining functionality
- Create a prototype of the List of Sections Affected (LSA) using the FR data
- Create a prototype XML editor for the CFR



# FR / CFR Pilot Objectives

- Promote interoperability among documents as they flow through the regulatory cycle
- Validate and, if necessary, extend the existing USLM schema for use in the regulatory cycle
- Increase the efficiency and accuracy of updating the CFR from regulations published in the FR
- Provide a USLM data set to support advanced delivery and presentation methods
- Provide an initial set of tools for editors to navigate and work with the FR and CFR in USLM
- Provide a USLM dataset to GPO for use in the Composition System Replacement project

# Current Status

- Using agile Scrum with two-week sprints
- Currently in Sprint 5 from July 3 to July 14
- Mapping GPO locator codes to USLM XML tags for enrolled bills
- Mapping GPO SGML tags to USLM XML tags for the Federal Register
- Updating the USLM schema to account for the structure and semantics of the FR and enrolled bills
- Updating the existing OLRC U.S. Code locator to USLM transform to handle enrolled bills and the FR
- Creating sample enrolled bill and FR USLM XML files for review by the House, Senate, GPO, and OFR
- Incorporating feedback from the House, Senate, GPO, and OFR into iterative development sprints
- Interfacing with GPO's govinfo and Composition System Replacement teams on integration activities

# More Information

- [uscode.house.gov/download/resources/USLM-User-Guide.pdf](http://uscode.house.gov/download/resources/USLM-User-Guide.pdf)
  - [www.akomantoso.org](http://www.akomantoso.org)
  - [www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc\\_home.php?wg\\_abbrev=legaldocml](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=legaldocml)
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- [www.govinfo.gov](http://www.govinfo.gov)
  - [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov)
  - [www.federalregister.gov](http://www.federalregister.gov)

# Questions